

A woman and a man are on mountain bikes in a forest. The woman, wearing a yellow tank top and a green helmet, is pointing towards a river. The man, wearing a blue shirt and a black helmet, is kneeling next to his bike. They are surrounded by tall evergreen trees and a large fallen log. The river is visible in the background, flowing through a wooded area.

# **TRAVEL OREGON RECREATION READY PROGRAM 2024-2025 GUIDELINES**



# I. PROGRAM INTENT

## TRAVEL OREGON'S MISSION AND PROGRAM KEY INITIATIVES

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The mission of Travel Oregon is to inspire travel that uplifts Oregon communities. Collaborating with stakeholders and partners to align as stewards of Oregon, we work to optimize economic opportunity, advance equity and respect ecosystems, cultures and places that make Oregon...Oregon.

### **Program purpose:**

The Recreation Ready program is available to rural and tribal communities that are part of the nine federally recognized Tribes of Oregon. The program is aimed at supporting communities in developing outdoor recreation visitor experiences that drive economic prosperity and respect natural environments while increasing access and equity.

Successful program applicants will have identified an outdoor recreation visitor experience project concept and be early in the development phase. At the time of program application, project concepts should not yet be ready to seek traditional infrastructure investments but in need of assistance to get to that position in the future.

Projects concepts must contribute to the development and improvement of communities throughout the state by means of the enhancement and expansion of the visitor industry.

Project concepts eligible for Recreation Ready should relate to:

- Soft-surface trail recreation
- Water recreation
- Dark skies
- Camping

### **Program cost:**

There is no cost to participate in the program, however there are capacity requirements to identify a Project Steering Committee, participate in meetings, community engagements and other work.

### **Optional Phase 1 Scholarship:**

A \$6,000 optional scholarship is available to the applicant organization to support their capacity for participation in Phase 1 of the program. If the applicant chooses not to select this optional scholarship payment, it will allow Travel Oregon to offer it to future program awardees who are in need.

## PROGRAM TIMELINE, PHASES & PARTICIPANT CAPACITY REQUIREMENTS

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### **PHASE 1: PARTICIPANT CAPACITY REQUIREMENTS**

Lead applicant and Project Steering Committee members should allocate an average of one to four hours per week for the Recreation Ready program in Phase 1. This includes completing Elevate Outdoors training and session, attending 1:1 meetings with Travel Oregon and consultant(s), participating in Project Steering Committee meetings, responding to emails and draft documents, and supporting the planning and execution of up to two in-person community engagement sessions.

## PHASE 1: PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT (JANUARY-JULY 2025)

### Step 1: Program Kick-Off (Jan. 8-17, 2025)

A virtual program kick-off meeting for all participants will be held on **Wed., Jan. 8 from 10-11:30 a.m.** **This meeting is required for lead applicants and optional for Project Steering Committee members.** Each Project Steering Committee will begin their bi-weekly 60-90-minute planning meetings on **Tues., Jan. 14 or Fri., Jan. 17.**

### Step 2: Oregon State University (OSU) Elevate Outdoors Training (Dec. 20, 2024 to Jan. 10, 2025)

Lead applicants will be required to take a self-paced, four-hour OSU virtual training titled Elevate Outdoors, which is designed to teach different skills and tools for developing inclusive and welcoming outdoor recreation visitor experiences. The training will culminate with a facilitated virtual session on Fri., Jan. 10 to help participants apply the learnings to their Recreation Ready project concept. Training and meetings are required for lead applicants and optional for Project Steering Committee members.

### Step 3: Feasibility Analysis (Jan. 8, 2025-Apr. 30, 2025)

Participants will receive dedicated technical assistance from Travel Oregon staff and an outdoor recreation planner/consultant. They will work as a team to elevate and build momentum for the outdoor recreation visitor experience project within their community. It includes a rapid feasibility analysis to evaluate the viability of the project, community readiness and assessment of risks and opportunities.

### Step 4: Disability and Inclusion Assessment (Feb. 2025-Apr. 2025)

A high-level disability and inclusion assessment of the project will be performed by a professional consultant to help support the project in meeting the growing diversity of visitor demand and foster more inclusive and accessible outdoor experience that is welcoming to all.

### Step 5: Community Engagement and Input (Apr. 2025-May 2025)

To engage the community and receive critical input on the project, a short virtual survey will be available, and one to two in-person engagement sessions will occur in the community.

### Step 6: Final Project Feasibility Report and Action Plan (May 2025-June 2025)

Project Steering Committee will submit a final feasibility report and action plan highlighting the key next steps and recommendations to advance the project forward into implementation. This will conclude Phase 1 of the program.

### Step 7: Mid-Program Evaluation (June 2025-July 2025)

Travel Oregon will determine the eligibility of participation in Phase 2 of the program, based upon the successful completion of Phase 1.

Destinations that successfully complete Phase 1 will be eligible for Phase 2.

## PHASE 2: POST-ENGAGEMENT AWARD (JULY 2025-DEC. 2026)

Eligible communities will be invited to participate in Phase 2 of the program. The final feasibility and action plan will be used to determine what work can be accomplished by December 31, 2026. Up to \$100,000 may be requested to advance the action plan outcomes.

Areas of work eligible for funding will include but are not limited to:

- Technical assistance for pre-infrastructure analysis and planning
- Technical or environmental assessments
- Infrastructure design or construction

## PHASE 2: PARTICIPANT CAPACITY REQUIREMENTS

Lead applicants should allocate an average of one to two hours of work per week. Depending on the developed action plan and determined project outcomes. The lead applicant will likely have reduced workload through the end of Phase 2. These roles and expectations will be assessed and determined during the feasibility study and action plan development period during Phase 1.

Project Steering Committee members should allocate an average of one hour per week through the first several months of Phase 2. These roles and expectations will need to be assessed and determined during the feasibility study and action plan development period during Phase 1.

## PHASE 2: REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Please refer to Section V. Program Contracts, of these guidelines for the requirements of reporting.

## II. PHASE 1: ELIGIBILITY

### ENTITY ELIGIBILITY

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The Recreation Ready program is available to rural and tribal communities that are part of the nine federally recognized Tribes of Oregon. This program is designed for Destination Management/Marketing Organizations (DMOs) or other organizations working closely with destination managers to be the lead applicant.

Eligible applicants include:

- 501(c)3, 501(c)6, government entity or Port District in rural Oregon\*
- One of the nine federally recognized tribes of Oregon\*

\*This program defines “rural” as communities with populations of 35,000 or less and not adjacent to (or part of) an urban or metropolitan area of 50,000 or more. Tribal applicants do not need to meet this definition of “rural.”

### INVOLVING YOUR DESTINATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION (DMO)

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This program requires participants to have a Project Steering Committee that will shape and guide their project. If the applicant is not a DMO, you will be required to have a DMO representative on your Steering Committee. For more information about DMOs, visit: <https://industry.traveloregon.com/resources/tourism-in-oregon/destination-management-%20organizations/>

### ENTITY INELIGIBILITY

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Ineligible applicants include those listed below:

- For-profit entities
- Entities that have a bankruptcy or other financial corruption within the past five years

## PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

*Eligible projects or initiatives must contribute to the improvement or expansion of the tourism economy in Oregon.*

Projects must be intended to increase the likelihood of visitation from 50 miles outside the local area.

The following project types are eligible:

- Soft-surface trail recreation
- Water recreation
- Dark skies
- Camping

## III. DEVELOPING A STRONG PHASE 1 APPLICATION

Applications should be clearly written and present a strong case for support. Preferences identified that will enhance a grant application's competitiveness include:

- The project strongly aligns with the program's purpose: Recreation Ready supports rural communities in developing outdoor recreation visitor experiences that drive economic prosperity and respect natural environments while increasing access and equity.
- The project could be catalytic to the future of the community.
- The application makes a strong case for the project's readiness for program participation.
- Community interest and engagement for the project is evident in the application.
- The application clearly describes your organization's needs for the program in order to move your project forward.

## IV. REVIEW OF PHASE 1 APPLICATIONS AND DECISION TO AWARD

The application process will open for a 25-day window. Applications will be reviewed and decisions to award will be made based on the following:

- Degree to which project is in alignment with the program's purpose and intent
- Demonstration of community support for project
- Demonstration of immediate need for project to receive program support
- Demonstration of project feasibility through research, data, etc.
- Demonstration of basic understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) concepts and a desire and commitment to elevating DEI in their future visitor experience development work
- Completeness of application and strength of case made for program support

The Scoring Rubric that application reviewers will use is located at the end of this document.

*Travel Oregon reserves the right to make changes to the Program Guidelines or to cancel the Recreation Ready Program in its entirety.*

## V. PROGRAM CONTRACTS

### PHASE 1: PROGRAM ENGAGEMENT CONTRACT

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Applicants who are admitted into Phase 1 of the program will enter into a contract with Travel Oregon, which includes agreements to comply with all guideline requirements and to complete projects as approved.

Applicants who elected to receive the optional Phase 1 Scholarship are eligible to use funds to support wages and administrative expenses needed to participate in the Recreation Ready program. Recipient will submit to Travel Oregon a written account of how scholarship funds were used and provide proof of expenses, which may include timesheets or payroll records.

The written report and proof of spending is due on July 31, 2025 and must be submitted through Travel Oregon's online grant management system.

### PHASE 2: POST-ENGAGEMENT AWARD CONTRACT

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Based on the evaluation review conducted at the end of Phase 1, communities will be eligible and invited to participate in Phase 2 of the program.

Applicants will enter into a contract with Travel Oregon, which includes agreements to comply with all guidelines to complete the identified outcomes by December 31, 2026.

### PHASE 2: REPORTING

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Required reports will be submitted through Travel Oregon's online grant management system.

#### Accomplishment Report and Final Budget

Recipients are required to complete a final Accomplishment Report. The final project budget along with copies of detailed project expenses (receipts) must be uploaded as part of the report. The Accomplishment Report is due January 31, 2027.

### PHASE 2: FUNDS DISBURSEMENT

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Any funds not used as approved shall be returned to Travel Oregon pursuant to the award contract. Projects must be completed within the approved timeline. Following approval and execution of contract, an initial disbursement of 50% of the funding award will be sent to recipient.

Recipients are eligible to receive up to 40% of the remaining awarded funds through a reimbursement system upon invoice and with documentation of expenses or by providing an invoice accompanied by a contractor-provided, detailed scope of work which includes confirmed costs and outlined dates of work. These funds may only be used for costs related to the project and clearly identified in the budget.

Final disbursement of funds will be sent to the recipient once the project is complete, the Accomplishment Report has been submitted and the final budget and proof of spending documentation has been reviewed and approved by Travel Oregon.

All invoices are required to be submitted through Travel Oregon's online grants management system.

## VI. QUESTIONS

View the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) page](#) for commonly asked questions. Direct additional questions to [grants@traveloregon.com](mailto:grants@traveloregon.com). Please allow three business days for Travel Oregon to respond.

### PHASE 1: APPLICATION CHECK LIST

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Access the 2024-2025 Recreation Ready Program Application ONLINE in the next section, below.

- [View the application questions before you begin](#)
- Refer to the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) page](#) for troubleshooting

Before beginning the online application, we encourage applicants to gather all information and/or documents required to submit the application:

- [Travel Oregon Substitute Federal W-9 Form](#) – form must be complete, signed and dated
- 3-5 Letters of Commitment from Project Steering Committee Members

### PHASE 1: ONLINE APPLICATION

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The Recreation Ready program Phase 1 application will be available for completion and submission beginning at 2 p.m. on Nov. 12, 2025. All applications must be completed and submitted online by 5 p.m. PT on Dec. 6, 2024.

Access the online application (beginning at 2 p.m. on Nov. 12, 2024) here:

<https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=otc>

Applicants who have previously applied for other Travel Oregon grants or funding, may use their existing password to log on. Once logged into your applicant dashboard, you can access the application by selecting “Apply” in the top navigation. All other applicants will need to select “Create New Account” to begin.

All submissions are final.

### PHASE 2: ONLINE APPLICATION

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The Recreation Ready program Phase 2 application will be available for completion and submission beginning at 12 p.m. on July 1, 2025. All applications must be completed and submitted online by 5 p.m. PT on September 2, 2025.

To access the application, the main point of contact for Phase 1 will login to the [grants management platform](#) and complete the assigned Follow Up form that will be visible under 2024-2025 Recreation Ready.

To invite another user or entity to complete portions of the Follow Up form, please use the Collaborate icon available in the right corner of the grants management platform when you are in the Follow Up form.

Click Collaborate and follow the instructions to send an Invite to additional collaborators on your application. Please direct any questions on how to add a collaborator or complete the Follow Up form to [grants@traveloregon.com](mailto:grants@traveloregon.com).

